

**La gauche, la droite et le marché: Histoire d'une idée controversée (XIXe–XXIe siècle).**By *David Spector*.

Paris: Odile Jacob, 2017. Pp. 296. €23.90 (paper); €17.99 (PDF or EPUB e-book).

This important, boldly argued book explores why so many people in France, on the left and right, have been reluctant to regard economic competition and markets as instruments of progress and the general good. David Spector begins with a 2011 survey showing the French to be far less inclined than their Italian, British, German, or American counterparts to agree that “the market economy is a system that functions rather well” (8). He also cites the public’s support for protecting cabbies from Uber, shopkeepers from supermarkets and Amazon, farmers from changes in EU rules, and Parisian apartment dwellers from rent deregulation. French antimarket exceptionalism, he argues, is hardly new. It has robust roots in nineteenth-century economic thought and politics that gave rise to an “economic culture” of antipathy to economic liberalism that contrasts to what developed in Germany, Britain, and the United States. On the left that antipathy became a matter of ideological conviction, and on the right a matter of political pragmatism to protect key voting groups from economic competition.

At the heart of the argument is a learned, highly readable comparative analysis of why ideas about free trade and competition developed so differently in Britain and France in the nineteenth century, especially on the left. In Britain, Spector argues, the cause of free trade, via the Anti-Corn Law League, took off in the 1830s in opposition to a landed aristocracy profiting from market protection at the expense of the poor and working class, whereas in France protectionism became the progressive cause. There the agrarian world of small producers that emerged from the French Revolution sought protection, especially from British goods. The left in France went on to defend its worker and peasant constituents more as producers than as consumers. Mid-century socialists from Louis Blanc to Pierre-Joseph Proudhon denounced unfettered competition as immiseration. By the end of the century mainstream socialists like Jean Jaurès took antiliberalism as a fundamental tenet of the movement.

Liberal economic theorists in France did little to shake the left of this conviction. With the important exception of Léon Walrus, most French economists swerved sharply rightward after the June Days of 1848 and the Paris Commune—again in contrast to Britain where key economic thinkers such as John Stuart Mill reached out to the left, laying the basis for a liberal-labor left alliance, which in turn made it easier for labor radicals to find strategic ways to make competitive markets in consumer goods benefit workers. Spector argues, too, that the French, again in contrast to the British, developed an animus to *homo oeconomicus*; that is, they valued quality over quantity, professional pride over income, solidarity over self-interest, and hence they remained skeptical of market liberalism. Spector sees this animus at work in the popularity of Solidarism at the turn of the century, and in the rise of a Durkheimian tradition in social science, running all the way to Pierre Bourdieu, that rejected economic reductionism.

Although Spector sees France’s culture of economic antiliberalism well established by the First World War, he still gives ample attention to its continuing evolution in the twentieth century. Here, he makes good use of comparisons with the United States and Germany. He contrasts the French left’s inclination to see monopolies as potential targets for nationalization with American progressives’ penchant to use antitrust regulation to break up the giants like Standard Oil, inspiring the left in the United States to consider state-regulated market competition as a useful weapon against big capital. Comparison with Germany becomes especially important in his final chapter, where he contrasts how France, Britain, and West Germany recovered economically after World War II. French leaders, left and right, adopted the most dirigiste approach to postwar reconstruction in Western Europe,

albeit with a willingness to open the French economy to greater competition via the Common Market. By contrast in West Germany, Christian Democrats and Social Democrats (SPD), repudiating Nazi statist and the business cartels associated with it, together embraced “ordoliberalism”—a commitment to markets, private enterprise, and a strong role for government to grease the wheels of competition.

Spector makes no secret of admiring the German SPD and the British Labor Party for their openness to measured doses of economic liberalism. He clearly longs for the same for the French left. And he sees precedent for it—for example, in Léon Blum’s admiration for American business after 1945, in Guy Mollet’s promotion of European integration in the 1950s, and in the left’s discreet opposition to the right wing’s Raffarin Law of 1996 that expanded protections for small retailers. But the left’s reluctance to express more openly its support for market solutions where they might serve the public good remains, in Spector’s view, an obstacle to progress in France.

Spector renders a tough verdict on France: intellectual failure on the left, duplicity on right. He may underestimate how much the right, too, had its own history of ideological allergies to market liberalism. Postwar Gaullism, after all, had its vestiges of Catholic ambivalence about *homo oeconomicus*, its ideological commitment to economic nationalism, and its confidence in dirigisme and planning, none of which made it easier to espouse the virtues of free trade and competition. And the left, like the right, had its own landscape of political opportunity and constraint to deal with. Since 1920 the French left was deeply divided, and no less so after 1945 when a strong Communist party and its non-Communist rivals competed for voters who had little faith in market capitalism. Large left-wing catchall parties like British Labor, the German SPD, and the Democratic Party in the United States could accommodate competing voices, including advocates of economic liberalism, without being snuffed out at the polls. But if this subject begs for more attention to politics and to the study of how economic ideas are diffused in society, Spector has nonetheless made a major contribution. His comparative analysis of the continuities in French economic thinking across two centuries makes this book essential reading for anyone seeking to understand debates over economic reform in France today.

HERRICK CHAPMAN

*New York University*

**Homes Away from Home: Jewish Belonging in Twentieth-Century Paris, Berlin, and St. Petersburg.** By *Sarah Wobick-Segev*. Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture. Edited by *David Baile* and *Sarah Abrevaya Stein*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018. Pp. xvi+296. \$65.00.

In the wake of the French Revolution, emancipation and secularization elevated the needs and concerns of the Jewish individual over the discipline and constraints of traditional communal and religious authority. In response, acculturated Jews found new, voluntaristic ways to express their solidarity and sense of difference. To this well-known narrative, Sarah Wobick-Segev brings the terms of analysis that are associated with the spatial turn in historiography. She describes how Jews in Berlin, Paris, and St. Petersburg created “homes away from home”—leisure and social spaces, separate from both domestic and religious sites, that allowed them to meet publicly and informally. These new spaces, she argues, “served as central sites for the expression of modern Jewish identity” (5) in ways that were not tied to the performance of religious rites. Among these spaces were coffeehouses, restaurants, summer camps, sports facilities, resort and spa hotels, concert